

EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY

SOLAR SYSTEM WORKING GROUP

Resolution addressed to the Science Working Teams of

Mars Express and Venus Express

The financial constraints imposed on the Science Programme budget arising from the desire to initiate the Cosmic Vision 2015-2025 programme has led to a need to limit the mission extensions of MEX and VEX.

The Solar System Working Group (SSWG), at its 123rd meeting held at ESTEC, Noordwijk (NL), noted that both missions continue to have important science to perform.

However, the SSWG also noted that

1. the level to which key mission objectives have been achieved differs from experiment to experiment
2. the provision of data to the community via the Planetary Science Archive remains, in some cases, at an unacceptable level
3. in the case of MEX, data and power allocations accepted at the start of the mission may be inappropriate at this stage of the mission if the total mission scientific return is to be optimized.

The SSWG has recommended to the advisory structure that a review be carried out in mid-2008 to assess the mission status and to attempt to push for further mission extensions.

To support this review, the MEX and VEX SWTs are strongly encouraged to

1. Review their scientific objectives (especially in the light of MRO observations).
2. Establish a clear plan on optimizing the total scientific return for the current and possible future extensions.
3. Act with all possible speed to ensure full access to acquired data.
4. Report to the SSWG (through the project scientists) on the results of these activities by April 2008.